

Middletown School Readiness Council

12:00 P.M. - 1:30 P.M.

Wednesday, October 16, 2013

Wilbert Snow School

299 Wadsworth St.

Middletown, CT 06457

RECEIVED

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TOWN CLERK
MIDDLETOWN, CONN.

Members Present: Ed Bonilla, Christine Fahey, Sheila Daniels, Susan Macary, Kitty Robinson, Wendy Berlind, Beverly Lawrence, Liz Fraser, Donna Marino, Susan Sienkewicz, and Izzi Greenberg. Also Present: Traci Dubois for Amy Waterman, Mia Vibert for Lisa Golebiewski, Cindy Guerreri, and Evelyn Farbman.

I. Welcome & Call to Order: Co-Chair Ed Bonilla called the meeting to order at 12:11 P.M., thanking those present for attending. Introductions were made.

II. Announcements: Donna distributed a flyer for the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) Provider's Luncheon to be hosted on Nov. 12th at 11:30 A.M. at central office. The purpose of this event is for providers to learn more about the program and become recruiting messengers for PLTI. Chris circulated the following flyers for workshop opportunities: Oct. 23rd and Nov. 14th Middletown Early Childhood Network (MECN) workshops, Goodwin College Early Childhood Literacy Conference to be held on May 1st, and the CT Association for the Education of Young Children's (CAEYC) Pathways to Quality Conference on Oct. 18th and 19th. She also circulated an article on the Great Divide, "Lifeline for Poor Children" shared with her by Jerome Long. Chris informed the Council that Bob Rosenbaum moved to Colorado and reports that he and Marjorie are living near family and doing well. He left us with a final math challenge which was distributed. His knowledge, humor and support of young people will be missed.

III. Acceptance of the Sept. 18, 2013 School Readiness Council meeting:

Wendy Berlind moved to accept the minutes from the above mentioned date. Donna Marino seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Financial Report: was distributed showing a total of \$8,250 in unearned funds to date due to the transition of children to kindergarten and the need to fill their spaces.

V. Coordinator's Report:

Monthly Report: Summary Report: was distributed showing enrollment, revenue, health insurance, income and number of Special Education children enrolled in our community School Readiness programs. The report reflects a high number of children identified with Special Education needs for this time of year and low Care4Kids income which will increase as the applications for new students get processed.

Community Foundation of Middlesex County Grant Update: An application has been submitted for our storytelling program; we will hear about an award in December.

Arts Catalyzing Grant: The YMCA submitted an application on behalf of the Middletown School Readiness programs and will serve as the fiscal agent if awarded the \$6,250 that was requested. If we receive both sources (Community Foundation of Middlesex County Foundation and Arts Catalyzing Grant) we will be able to provide many storytelling performances to our preschools.

Race To The Top - Early Learning Challenge (RTTT-ELC) Update: a copy of the Summary of the 2013 RTTT-ELC proposal was distributed to the Council. The goal is to maximize high quality programming for children with high needs. High needs are defined as being identified as having special needs, English Language Learners, and/or children from low-income families. The application is due today (Oct. 16th) and should be posted on the federal web site soon. CT Voices will analyze the application and develop a summary. The CT Early Learning Standards and CT's Quality Rating and Information System (QRIS) are supposed to be released once the application is submitted. The QRIS will be called **Connect to Quality (C2Q)**; it will be mandatory for publicly funded programs and voluntary for those receiving private funds. Center based programs that are presently exempt, such as those in public schools, will have three years to become licensed. The system has a large technical assistance and professional development arm to support programs as they move up the quality ladder.

The proposal has a focus on licensed family child care and unlicensed care providers, as most of our high need infants and toddlers are served on these settings. Efforts will be made to license Kith 'n Kin providers. The Kith and Kin program in New Haven supports unlicensed programs as they go through the licensing process and that model that will be replicated throughout the state.

There will be a scholarship program for children who live in communities that do not have access to Head Start, State Funded Child Care Programs, and/or School Readiness programs so that they will have access to preschool before attending kindergarten. Professional development will be provided for home visitors and early screenings will be increased. Susan Macary summarized Middletown's participation in a pilot this year of a campaign to increase the use of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) across the state, a developmental screening tool provided by Help Me Grow. The Nurturing Family Network at Family Advocacy at Middlesex Hospital is taking on this project. Community cafés will be held in an attempt to train parents to administer the Ages and Stages screening. It is a big campaign to catch kids early for Birth to Three referrals. Thanks to Middlesex Hospital for spearheading this work. Health and mental health consultants are also included in the plan. Other system building activity includes work on the Pre-K to Grade Three continuum with plans for a training academy for principals to earn an Early Childhood Leadership Certificate.

Chris introduced Evelyn Farbman who spoke about what she saw in her experience as an instructor at Capitol Community College. The students wanting to teach preschool are often illiterate. Reform was crafted in legislation on Remedial and Developmental Education programs. The model from Baltimore was adopted with little consideration of students. The problem it poses is that access to certain classes is denied and this closes an open door for some students. The new legislation didn't intend that to be the case. The new plan only allows one

semester of preparation. After that semester, students enter college courses and receive embedded support, but there are no funds for this. The pathway for these people that want an early childhood education may close. Evelyn noted that more voices are needed to support reform that will work and that is where she felt the Council could lend their assistance. Liz added that changes are ahead for the adult education programs. They will include more rigor in the General Education Development (GED) and basic skills programs and shared her concern for that segment of the community. Izzi asked about the idea of regional centers being used for courses and their impact on transportation challenges. Evelyn responded that transportation does become an issue. The full-time course program also creates an issue for those that need to work and go to school part-time. Closing off the pool of possible early childhood workforce people does not make sense. In order the CT Early Childhood Teaching Credential (ECTC), college programs must be accredited and approved; there are only seven higher education institutions in the state that are presently approved. The Worthy Wage campaign is a component of this workforce issue and the hope is that the Office of Early Childhood will look into all of this and make changes that will work.

CT Data Collaborative: has created a centralized data storage web site that includes an early childhood portal. The web site can be accessed at <http://ctdata.org/ec>. The data is community specific and can be compared both to other communities and the state. The web site is not easily intuitive; upcoming trainings will be offered in computer labs. Examples of types of data available are HUSKY enrollment for children age birth to eight, CMT scores for 2013, chronic absence data for 2012, birth/birth outcome data for 2010, and unduplicated child abuse and neglect rates for 2011 and 2012. New data sets are being added all the time.

Early Literacy Update: A series of four professional development sessions for preschool and kindergarten teachers will begin on October 21st at Grace Lutheran Preschool. The topic for the first workshop in the series is early literacy.

Pre-K - K Alignment Committee Update: A playgroup series similar to that held at Bielefield last spring will be conducted at Spencer School this year. A "sister school" program has been developed pairing kindergartens and preschool programs that are geographically close throughout the city. Circle of Security (COS) meetings are held quarterly with Charlie Slaughter who has connected with Dept. of Children and Families (DCF) for funds to offer COS to families. Heddy Chang, the national guru on chronic absenteeism, will hold a forum on Nov. 12th at the LOB followed by a working meeting with Discovery communities. School Readiness providers will attend and school district personnel will be invited to participate.

Discovery Update: The Stone Soup Conference is being held next Tuesday, Oct. 22nd at the Crowne Plaza in Cromwell.

Family Resource Centers (FRC) Update: Tracey reported that Amy will return to work next month and that all of the FRC programs are up and running. She noted that the Kindergarten Kickstart program had some kinks at its Green Street location, but they will be worked out and a smoother run is expected for next summer.

Early Head Start (EHS) Update: In Alice's absence, Chris noted that the federal shutdown will not impact our EHS program unless it runs past Jan. 1st.

Opportunity Knocks (OK) Update: OK Kickoff held in September had a great turnout! Board of Education Cafe Services Director, Ava McGlew is working with Even Start to offer the breakfast program to their children and may also be able to provide lunch for the mothers in the program. Dr. Gatehouse has donated dental health brochures that will be included in parent information packets given to families of newborns at Middlesex Hospital.

Head Start Update: Mia noted that Head Start is working on decreasing absenteeism and tardiness by promoting school attendance using incentives. This Attendance Incentives program is being implemented by all School Readiness programs and Head Start this year. She noted that it is being well received and the incentives have created excitement on the program.

VI. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 1:25 P.M. with thanks to those in attendance.

The next meeting
of the Middletown School Readiness Council will take place on
Wednesday, November 20th, 2013.
from
12:00 - 1:30 P.M.
at
Wilbert Snow School
299 Wadsworth St.
Middletown, CT 06457

Respectfully Submitted by:
Sheila C. Daniels